

Department of Health

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Ms Fiona Murphy

Secretary

Select Committee on Transfer of Care Delays (Ambulance Ramping)

transferofcare@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Murphy

Subject: Select Committee on Transfer of Care Delays (Ambulance Ramping) Inquiry

Thank you for your correspondence dated 27 June 2024 which referred to the correspondence sent on 25 January 2024, seeking further information in relation to a number of issues relevant to the Inquiry. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay, the requested data was being finalised when the Committee ceased at the prorogation of Parliament and dissolution of the House of Assembly on 14 February 2024 and Ambulance Tasmania were awaiting a further update.

I have addressed the request for information below:

1. The protocol(s) or document (s) setting out the guidelines for staff to complete mandatory online training

Ambulance Tasmania does not have a protocol or document that provides guidelines for staff regarding the completion of mandatory online training.

2. The number of P0 and P1 cases that were unable to be immediately assigned an ambulance in the 2022/23 year, broken down by region

Triple Zero calls to the Ambulance Tasmania Communications Centre are answered by Emergency Call-Takers (ECT) and triaged using the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS). MPDS provides a series of questions that enables assessment of caller information and produces an appropriate determinant code aligned to Ambulance Tasmania's dispatch grid. The dispatch grid assigns the priority of the ambulance response based on the seriousness of the call. Priority 0 (P0) and Priority 1 (P1) cases are life-threatening cases that require an immediate dispatch of an emergency ambulance travelling under lights and sirens. These incidents are assigned to ambulance crews by an Emergency Medical Dispatcher within the Communications Centre.

The answering and triaging of Triple Zero calls is a structured process using MPDS. The complexity of the presentation, caller information and incident location influence the time taken to reach a determinant code

and therefore an incident priority. Furthermore, based on information from the caller, an initial Triple Zero call make be prioritised as a Priority 2 incident, and then during the course of additional questioning using MPDS, be upgraded to a Priority 1 incident.

The Ambulance Tasmania 'assigned' target – that is, the time taken to assign an ambulance to an incident for Priority 0 and Priority 1 cases is three (3) minutes from the answering of the Triple Zero call.

In 2022-23, the number of P0 and P1 cases that were not assigned an emergency ambulance response within three minutes is provided in the Table below.

Region	2022/23 Incidents with delayed activation	2022/23 percentage of Incidents with delayed activation	2022/23 Incidents with immediate activation (less or equal to 3 minutes)	2022/23 percentage of Incidents with immediate activation (less than or equal to 3 minutes)
North	2929	25.7	8 477	74.3 %
North West	1785	19.3	7 467	80.7 %
South	6711	29.7	15 913	70.3 %

3. The total number of paramedic shifts worked in the 2022/23 year

Ambulance Tasmania is unable to reliably report the total number of shifts worked for all of the 2022-23 year due to paper-based systems.

The establishment of a Daily desk capability in December 2022, centralised the recording of shifts worked and unfilled on a statewide basis. Data is provided for the period 31 December 2022 to 30 June 2023, as below:

Total shifts at establishment statewide	30 408
Total shifts worked statewide	26 879 (88.4 %)
Total shifts unfilled statewide	3 697 (12.6 %).

4. The number of paramedic shifts that have finished within 30 minutes of the rostered finish time in the 2022/23 year

Ambulance Tasmania does not have systems that enable this information to be captured at this time. The rollout of the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) may provide increased ability to capture this type of information.

5. The average length of overtime worked per shift by paramedics in 2022/23 (e.g. 5 shifts finish on time and 1 shift finishes 30 minutes late = average overtime per shift of 5 minutes)

Ambulance Tasmania does not have systems that enable this information to be captured at this time. The rollout of the HRIS may provide increased ability to capture this type of information.

6. The number of paramedic shifts that would have resulted in a fully staffed roster in the Northern Region on the night shift of 9 December 2023

A fully staffed night shift roster for the Northern Region entails:

- Urban Stations - Three Launceston crews, which includes a CRU (single Intensive Care Paramedic response), two Mowbray crews and one an Operations Supervisor. A total of 11 paramedics
- Double Branch Stations – Single paramedic at Beaconsfield, Campbell Town, Deloraine, George Town and St Helens. A total of five paramedics
- Single Branch Stations – Single paramedic on-call overnight at Bridport, Longford, Miena, Scottsdale and Scamander. A total of five paramedics.

This totals 21 paramedics, or 16 on-shift and five on-call.

7. The number of paramedics that worked on the night shift of 9 December 2023

In the Northern Region prior to midnight a total of 16 paramedics were working, with eight on -shift and four on-call. After midnight there were 14 paramedics working, with 10 on-shift and four on-call. This entailed:

- Urban - Eight paramedics were on-shift before midnight and six were on-shift after midnight
- Double Branch Stations - Four paramedics were on-shift
- Single Branch Stations – Four paramedics were on-call.

Table – Summary of Northern Staffing – Night Shift 9 December 2023

Stations	Full Staffing – Number of Paramedics	Actual Number of Paramedics – before midnight	Actual Number of Paramedics – after midnight
Urban – including CRU and Operations Supervisor	11 (on-shift)	8 (on-shift)	6 (on-shift)
Double Branch	5 (on-shift)	4 (on-shift)	4 (on-shift)
Single Branch	5 (on-call)	4 (on-call)	4 (on-call)
Total	21	16	14
Total coverage - percentage	100 %	76 %	67 %
Total on-shift coverage - percentage	100 %	70 %	62.5 %

In correspondence to the Select Committee dated 10 January 2024, it was advised that the Northern Region night shift coverage on 9 December 2023, was 77 per cent (now corrected to 76 percent). I would like to acknowledge that this was the staffing coverage at the commencement of the night shift and that the response did not account for the change in staffing at midnight when two paramedics on overtime went off shift, with 62.5 per cent of staffing coverage for the remainder of the night shift.

8. The percentage of night shifts unfilled across the State from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023.

The percentage of night shifts unfilled across the State from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023, was 15.36 per cent.

I trust the information provided will meet the requirements of the Select Committee.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Michelle Baxter.

Michelle Baxter
Acting Chief Executive

22 July 2024